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Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee

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Ref: Call-in of the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park Creation of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and Gravel Yard restoration, taken at Cabinet on 2nd January 2025

Further to the Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Meeting on 2nd January 2025 and the decision regarding Item 12. Little Marlow Lakes Country Park – Creation of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Gravel Yard restoration, we are writing to support the call-in to be considered at the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee on Thursday 30th January 2025. Wild Marlow is a volunteer charity, concerned with the wildlife and biodiversity in and around Marlow.

Unfortunately due to the timings of the Cabinet Paper publication on 20th December 2024, followed swiftly by the Cabinet meeting on 2nd January, we were unaware of the proposal and unable to consult prior to the decision being taken. We submitted a letter outlining our major concerns, dated and circulated to all cabinet members by email on 1st January 2025;

Spade Oak Lake Nature Reserve contains very important priority woodland, wetland and reedbed habitats and with 186 bird species recorded since 2014, including multiple Schedule 1 protected species. This is one, if not the, most important sites in the whole county, the valuation given to site is clearly an underestimate and the site is certainly of county if not national value.

The draft proposals will cause significant damage to these populations with the introduction of all-access footpaths in close proximity to nesting/roosting sites, especially if off-lead dogs zones are permitted, in accordance with SANG requirements. The stipulation that these zones be fenced for safety, would prevent the current free movement of protected mammal species, such as badgers, from the foraging areas currently used.

We ask that the call-in is agreed and actioned to allow a full ecological impact assessment to be carried out and appropriate consultation with the Council's Ecology Team, Bucks Bird Club, RSPB, BBOWT, Little Marlow Parish Council and Wild Marlow, to ensure there are no significant adverse impacts on the priority habitats supporting the protected and priority species in this area.

Yours sincerely

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